

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FINAL

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Schnull-Rauch House

AND/OR COMMON

Schnull-Rauch House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

3050 North Meridian Street

CITY, TOWN

Indianapolis

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Eleventh

STATE

Indiana

VICINITY OF

CODE
018

COUNTY
Marion

CODE
097

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

—DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

—STRUCTURE

—SITE

—OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

—PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

—BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

—IN PROCESS

—BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

—UNOCCUPIED

—WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

—YES: RESTRICTED

—YES: UNRESTRICTED

☒ NO

PRESENT USE

—AGRICULTURE

—COMMERCIAL

—EDUCATIONAL

—ENTERTAINMENT

—GOVERNMENT

—INDUSTRIAL

—MILITARY

—MUSEUM

—PARK

☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

—RELIGIOUS

—SCIENTIFIC

—TRANSPORTATION

—OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

c/o John G. Rauch, Jr., Attorney at Law

STREET & NUMBER

510 Guaranty Building, 20 North Meridian Street

CITY, TOWN

Indianapolis

VICINITY OF Indiana

STATE

46204

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of Marion County Recorder

STREET & NUMBER

Room 721, City-County Building

CITY, TOWN

Indianapolis

STATE

Indiana 46204

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Indianapolis-Marion County Survey of Historic Resources

DATE

September 1977

—FEDERAL —STATE ☒ COUNTY —LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission

CITY, TOWN

Room 705, Union Title Bldg., 155 E. Market Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Schnull-Rauch House may be described as a residential example of the French Romanesque style. The home has been carefully maintained in its original use as a single family residence since its construction in 1902-1904. A detailed description of the home follows, touching upon its stylistic classification, its exterior and interior features, outbuildings and landscaping, general condition, and physical context.

Architectural Style

The Schnull-Rauch House may be properly placed in the French Romanesque, or Romanesque Revival category of architectural style. Authority for such a classification may be found in Wilbur D. Peat's Indiana Houses of the Nineteenth Century. Peat's work is widely consulted in Indiana as an authoritative reference guide to domestic architecture of the last century in the state. The author, a distinguished historian of Indiana art, made a study of the Schnull-Rauch House while preparing the book. He includes mention of 3050 North Meridian Street as one of the last examples of the Romanesque Revival movement in Indiana which can be dated.¹

The Schnull-Rauch residence appears to easily meet the criteria set forth by Peat for classifying Romanesque residences: a bold, ponderous design with massive and redoubtable air based loosely on French medieval precedent. Like other Romanesque Revival residences catalogued by Peat, the Schnull-Rauch House possesses a heavy round tower with a conical roof and a generally severe appearance. The medieval flavor is strengthened by the large, crenellated stone entrance porch attached to the front (east) elevation.²

It does not seem appropriate to affix the label "Richardsonian Romanesque" to the Schnull-Rauch House. Unlike the work of H.H. Richardson, the inspirer of the Richardsonian Romanesque movement, 3050 North Meridian Street does not exhibit round arches, "rock faced masonry," or arcades.³ In Indiana, as Peat observes in his book, the Richardsonian treatment was typically reserved for "large civic and commercial structures." Domestic designs such as the Schnull-Rauch House seem to have drawn directly on medieval precedents for inspiration.⁴ The home's architect, Bernard Vonnegut, had both studied architecture and traveled in Europe before establishing his architectural firm in Indianapolis.⁵

On the other hand, some of the phrases used by Whiffen in referring to the late Romanesque Revival style, "weight and massiveness" and "a general largeness and simplicity of form," clearly pertain to the design of the Schnull-Rauch House.⁶

¹Wilbur D. Peat, Indiana Houses of the Nineteenth Century (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1962), p. 161.

²Peat, p. 158-159.

³Marcus Whiffen, American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Style (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1977), p. 133.

⁴Peat, p. 158.

⁵Jacob Piatt Dunn, Greater Indianapolis (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing 1910) Volume II, p. 966.

⁶Whiffen, p. 133.

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Exterior Description

The Schnull-Rauch House has been from its construction a detached, single-family residence placed approximately in the middle of a lot measuring 107 feet by 298 feet. The carriage house-garage pertaining to the property occupies an additional parcel measuring 40 feet by 57 feet connected to the west end of the main lot.

The overall shape and plan of the house may be described as a three-story rectangle, adjoined at its northeast corner by a large tower, on its south side by a projecting bay of semicircular shape, and on its west end by a narrower, rectangular, servants' wing. The residence possesses the following numbers of vertical bays: Five (5) bays across the front (east) elevation, nine (9) bays across the south elevation, three (3) bays across the rear (west) elevation, and ten (10) across the north elevation.

The home is constructed on a limestone foundation; the walls are composed of buff-colored face bricks, which are laid in Flemish bond. Stone is used for the imposing entrance porch and for the window lintels and sills of the facade.

The roof of the Schnull-Rauch House is of a very steep hip. The projecting bay mentioned earlier on the south elevation and a wall dormer on the north elevation meet the main, east-west hipped roof at right angles. The roof of the servants' wing, three stories in height, continues from the main roof at a lower pitch. All the principal roofs of the house are covered with the original red tile shingles. The semicircular piazza porch on the south elevation (see below) and the enclosed rear porch have been re-roofed with composition shingles in recent years.

Speaking specifically of porches, the principal porch of the home shelters the front (east) entrance. Crenellations line the porch's cornice, and seen from the side, the porch resembles a porte cochère. The floor of the entrance porch continues as an ell-shaped piazza along the east and south elevations of the residence, finally terminating on the west side of the projecting bay described above. A somewhat conical porch shelters the portion of the piazza lining the bay. A Neo-Classic stone balustrade runs along the stretch of open piazza between the east and south porches. A third porch adjoins the south side of the servant's wing on the west side of the house. Designed to serve as a summer porch, this structure is two-stories high, frame, and possesses a red tile roof. Next, a completely enclosed brick rear porch attaches to the west elevation. Finally, a glass canopy hanging from the north elevation above the carriage entrance serves as the residence's porte cochère.

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Exterior Description (cont.)

Three types of windows provide light to the interior of 3050 North Meridian Street. The majority of windows below the cornice of the roof are double-hung and plate glass ("one over one"). For the windows of the third story, double-hung, multi-paned windows (of either six or eight panes) are used. Thirdly, at least five, single-paned, leaded, stained glass windows appear in the first and second stories.

Access to the house is available through four entrances. In the main, east entrance, double doors with bevelled glass panels are framed by side lights and a transom. A less pretentious entrance awaits the visitor at the north, carriage entrance. There, a conventional door amidst side lights and transom offers access to the interior. A third entry is found at the summer porch on the side elevation, while the fourth and last point of entry occurs on the west (rear) elevation into the kitchen and servants' quarters.

The four chimneys projecting from the roof feature a simple design of slender dimension, adorned only by three courses near the top of each. The chimneys appear to be based more on "Jacobethan," rather than the Romanesque precedent.

Four dormers also project from the roof of the home. Three of the dormers, two facing south and the other north, contain a single window. The fourth, of commanding appearance on the east elevation, is composed of two. Besides the dormer windows, a wall dormer appears above the carriage entrance on the north elevation. Its corbiestepped shape makes it distinctive.

In keeping with the simple, severely medieval philosophy of Romanesque design, the facade of the Schnull-Rauch House is adorned with few decorative elements. The entrance porch provides the major exception. The stone crenellations along its cornice are elaborately carved. On the corners of the porch appear elongated shields and heraldic scrollwork. The shields are of particular interest in that they were used as a trademark of sorts by the architect of the home, Bernard Vonnegut.⁷ Additionally, copper lanterns hang on either side of the steps leading up to the entrance. A final decorative element to be observed in the facade harks back to the Romanesque design of the residence: a few brick corbels appear along the cornice of the tower and below the coursing between the tower's second and third stories.

⁷ Interview with Mrs. Kurt Lindener (daughter of Bernard Vonnegut), January

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Interior Description

The Description of the Schnull-Rauch House now turns to its attention to the interior, first by means of a general discussion of significant interior features, and then by more specific descriptions of significant rooms.

Most of the woodwork of the Schnull-Rauch House retains its original appearance, covered only by a patina of built-up varnish. Woods used in the home include golden oak, cherry, and mahogany.⁸ Wood is employed extensively in the interior. The fireplace mantels, ceiling beams, columns and pedestals, interior cornices, and modified wainscoting all have been created in fine woods, as well as the baseboards, window sashes and surrounds, and, of course, floors. The last feature occurs in parquet patterns throughout of the house. The nine mantels of the residence appear in wood, carved marble and brick.

The atmosphere of the Edwardian period fills the interior. The early twentieth century mood is enhanced by the wall coverings in each room of the original painted burlap and by the authentic turn-of-century hardware found throughout the house. The door plates, door knobs, hinges, etc. of the home boast two distinct designs. The first floor displays a distinctive lion's head emblem on most of its doorplates. The second floor hardware is mounted with a fleur de lis design.

With respect to lighting fixtures, a few of the Edwardian pieces remain; for the most part, chandeliers of several time periods and styles have been substituted.

Five stained glass windows grace the interior. Custom-made, the windows vary in size, depending on their location.

A word should be directed to the furnishings of the interior. Some are merely the natural accumulation of seventy-five years of collection by a single family and possess perhaps no inherent tie to the Schnull-Rauch House. Others, however, have been a part of the interior's character from its creation. These latter furnishings--the Persian rugs, the velvet portiere curtains, the paintings, the various pieces of furniture bought to furnish specific rooms--all contribute to the pervasive Edwardian mood present in the interior of 3050 North Meridian.

⁸ Interview with Mrs. John G. Rauch, Sr., April 25, 1979

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Interior Description (cont.)

Descriptions of rooms of special significance are now presented.

As the visitor enters the residence from the east entrance, he enters the reception hall, designed with an unusual width (eleven feet) to accomodate large receptions more easily and framed in golden oak woodwork, stained green. A beamed ceiling appears overhead and two Ionic oaken columns flank access to the stair hall beyond. Sliding doors to the front sitting and drawing rooms expand or shrink the area available for hosting a reception.

The drawing room, located on the north side of the reception hall, is the most formal room of the house and shows the least wear. Attention is drawn immediately to the shimmering green moiré silk screens hanging on the walls. Next, one turns to the finely-carved mantel. The latter, like the rest of the woodwork in the room, is made of mahogany. The mantel was especially designed to frame the elegant Victorian mirror hanging above the mantel shelf. The ceiling of the drawing room is graced by delicate plaster decorative motifs, the floor by a scarcely-worn Persian rug purchased in Persia for the home. A stained glass window provides a mosaic of bright colors along the north side of the room.⁹

The dining room of the residence, reached by crossing the stair hall from the reception hall, possesses an elaborately carved mantel with a green mosaic hearth. Like the rest of the room, the mantel is made of cherry grained to resemble mahogany. The mantel shelf is supported on either side by consoles of volute design. Carved heraldic shields and banners adorn the mantel and the denticulated cornice of the room. The north side of the room is dominated by a large sideboard (or buffet), a stained glass window with heraldic designs, and recessed columns. The lavish display of mahogany-grained cherry woodwork continues with beams in the ceiling and modified wainscoting on the south and west walls. Two pieces of furniture deserve mention in completing a survey of the dining room. A Colonial Revival porcelain cabinet of complementary color and design to the room blends into the west wall. In the center of the room stands an early twentieth century, oval, mahogany dining table, which can be expanded to comfortably seat eighteen to twenty people.¹⁰

The main stairway connects the first and second floors. The stair hall of which it is a part runs north-south in the mid-section of the house, thereby intersecting with the reception hall at a right angle. The stairway and stair hall are finished in oak. The balustrade, newel post and stairwell cornice continue the heraldic carvings and denticulation mentioned earlier in the dining room. A bronze electric lantern graces the

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

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Interior Description (cont.)

top of the newel post, while Persian rugs cover the stairway steps. The chief glory of the stairway is easily the stained glass windows at the landing between the first and second floors. A large central, single panel is framed by side lights and by three transoms. All display simply detailed, geometric and organic designs.

On the second floor, the Tower Bedroom, one of six bedrooms originally designed for the home, takes its name from the northeast tower, which provides the chamber with its rounded contour. Two stained glass windows add an extra element of color to the otherwise plainly finished room. As throughout the house, Persian rugs cover the parquet floor. Reputedly, the bed in the Tower Bedroom originally belonged to "Diamond Jim" Brady.¹¹

The ballroom occupies easily half of the third floor. It is finished in golden oak woodwork and boasts plastered walls and ceilings as well as a hardwood dance floor. Ballroom lights line the cornice of the ballroom, which is characterized by sloping walls (the result of the hipped roof on the exterior) and by five alcoves adjoining the ballroom dance floor. The northwest alcove was designed for the musicians or a small orchestra which once accompanied parties and balls held in the residence. The Rauch family recalls that in the past the ballroom has hosted as many as seventy-two people for a buffet supper. This would allow for both buffet tables for seating guests and room for dancing.¹²

Before leaving the interior, one final room should be touched upon in a survey of significant rooms in the interior of 3050 North Meridian Street. The billiard room, located beneath the dining room, is the only finished room in the basement. Its woodwork is of golden oak and includes "built-in" Brunswick billiard fixtures. The most intriguing aspect of the room historically is the marble black and white, "chessboard" floor. The latter was salvaged by the Rauchs in the late 1930's from the lobby of the Grand Hotel, a leading Victorian hostelry, when the hotel was razed. The billiard table, an early manufacture of the Brunswick firm, is a spectacular affair, resting on legs from which lion's heads and claws project.¹³

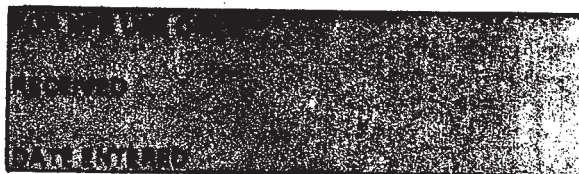
¹¹Ibid.

¹²Interview with Mrs. John G. Rauch, Sr., September 20, 1978

¹³Interview with Mrs. Rauch, April 25, 1979

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Outbuildings and Grounds

The Schnull-Rauch House claims only one outbuilding: its carriage house-garage. As mentioned above in introducing the "Exterior Description" section of this Analysis, the carriage house straddles the northwest corner of the 107 by 298 feet lot on which the house stands and an adjacent parcel measuring 40 by 57 feet.

The carriage house was constructed at the same time as the residence and exhibits a similar design and use of materials. The eastern section of the carriage house directly reflects the home's design, with a red-tile, hipped roof, dormer window, and buff front-brick laid in Flemish bond. This east section is endowed with enough space to house three carriages (later automobiles) in its ground floor and hay and straw in the loft above the carriages. The west, or rear section of the carriage house-garage provides space for a stable and machine shop on the first floor and chauffeur's quarters and storage space on the second. No major alterations are evident in the exterior or interior of either section of the carriage house.

Landscaping features are limited to the south side of Schnull-Rauch property. A small lawn extends southwest of the house, sheltered from noise and distractions by dense tree foliage to the east and by heavy plantings of flowering and evergreen shrubs to the north and west. A luxuriant bed of myrtle offers contrast to the lawn as the former stretches along the southeast elevation of the house. The trees in the front lawn include copper beech, pine, horse chestnut, and Japanese Gingko.¹⁴

Objects of artistic interest on the ground of 3050 North Meridian include the diminutive, pre-cast concrete sundial standing in the midst of the south lawn, the wrought iron gates which guard access to the yard and to a rectangular, fenced garden south of the carriage house, and several cast-iron hitching posts with horses' heads located adjacent to the circular driveway between the residence and carriage house. A final objet d'art stands on a circular grassy plot in the center of the driveway. A birdbath of marble is surrounded by a circular wooden arbor.

¹⁴Ibid.

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Condition of the Schnull-Rauch Property

As may be evident in the above description of the Schnull-Rauch House and grounds, the 3050 North Meridian Street property has received a high degree of care during its more than seventy-five years of existence. This well-maintained state is attributable to the high standards of maintenance employed by the Rauch family during their over fifty years of residence in 3050 North Meridian. To the Rauchs also goes the credit for the home's uniquely preserved interior and exterior character.

These general statements of condition are supported by the architectural analysis of the residence of the home which was done in the fall of 1978 by Harry E. Hunter, A.I.A., for Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana. Mr. Hunter opens his initial report with the statement: "A preliminary investigation of the Schnull-Rauch House, 3050 North Meridian Street, indicates the structure is in exceptionally good condition for a building seventy-five years old."

Physical context of Schnull-Rauch House

In closing the description section, a word should be directed to the physical context, or environment, in which the Schnull-Rauch House exists presently. To the south, the "world's largest children's museum," a 1974-1976 monolithic edifice, hosts an estimated 720,000 visitors a year.¹⁵ To the north and across Meridian Street to the east stand apartment buildings dating from the period of 1910 to 1930. A block to the south a series of life insurance companies appear, two of which occupy former residences of equivalent character to the Schnull-Rauch House.

¹⁵Mildred S. Compton, in the introduction to the 1977 Annual Report of the Children's Museum of Indianapolis (Indianapolis: Children's Museum of Indianapolis, 1977), p. 5

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION	Ethnic history		

SPECIFIC DATES	Constructed 1902-1904	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Bernard Vonnegut, architect
	Used as residence 1904-		Brandt Brothers of Indianapolis, contractors
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE			

Introduction

The historical importance of the Schnull-Rauch House rests on its ties to five types of historical significance: Social patterns, ethnic history, commerce, law, and architecture.

In the first place, the residence at 3050 North Meridian Street survives as the only single-family mansion remaining on the "Edwardian Row" of Indianapolis. On the second count, the home is an unusual reflection of upper class German life in the city in the early twentieth century. Thirdly, the home presents the visitor with an authentic glimpse into the domestic life of one of the principal merchant families of turn-of-the-century Indianapolis. In the fourth place, 3050 North Meridian carries with it strong associations with one of the city's leading attorneys and civic leaders during the past sixty years. Finally, the Schnull-Rauch House stands today as one of the few French Romanesque residential designs produced in Indianapolis during the Victorian and Edwardian periods and one of a handful of surviving residences designed by a master architect, Bernard Vonnegut. Following are individual treatments of the five themes of significance introduced above.

Significance Related to Social Patterns

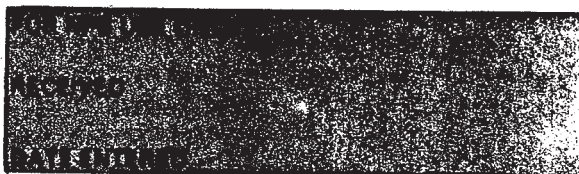
Since the Civil War era, North Meridian Street has reigned as the supreme residential avenue of Indianapolis.

In the Victorian period, the wealthy of the city sought lots for their fine residences on Meridian Street between the "Circle" (at the center of the downtown) and what is now 16th Street. As the city grew in the late nineteenth century, the affluent sought new residential sites further north on Meridian Street. About the turn of the century, the wealthy residential expansion crossed Fall Creek (about 2.5 miles north of the central business district) and a new group of palatial homes rose above the creek on Meridian Street. One of the first to be constructed was built just above 30th Street by Gustav Schnull. Soon, a host of fashionable residences joined the Schnull House, reaching north to what is now 38th Street.

As the twentieth century passed, the pattern of seeking home sites north of the city limits continued. The great palaces of Meridian Street south of 38th Street were gradually abandoned by their families. Demolition or remodeling for offices became the fate of most of the Meridian mansions.

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Significance Related to Social Patterns (cont.)

Today, 3050 North Meridian stands as virtually the only single-family residence remaining on Meridian Street south of 38th Street. As outlined in the Description section, the Schnull and Rauch families have carefully refrained from major remodeling in the interior, as well as on the exterior. The result is a remarkable "document" of affluent Indianapolis society before World War I.

Ethnic Significance

The Schnull-Rauch House claims considerable interest on account of its close associations with the German-American experience in Indianapolis history. Evidence is in abundance throughout the home of four of the most prominent German families in the city's late nineteenth and early twentieth century period.

In the first place, the home itself was designed by one of the leading German architects of turn-of-the-century Indianapolis, Bernard Vonnegut (see architectural significance, below), member of a large and vigorous clan which once dominated the community's hardware trade through their Vonnegut Hardware Company.

Secondly, the builder of the home, Gustav A. Schnull (1862-1936), represented the second generation of a German family which excelled as wholesale grocers. The patriarch of the Schnull family, Henry Schnull (1833-1905), was a gifted entrepreneur who became one of the leading capitalists of nineteenth century Indianapolis. Besides founding Schnull and Company, the family wholesale grocers firm, Henry Schnull singlehandedly established the city's wholesale district and helped to found Merchants National Bank, today one of the city's principal banks.¹

The wife of Gustav Schnull, Mathilda Mayer Schnull (1865-1923), introduced the influence of a third prominent German family into the home. Mrs. Schnull's father, Charles Mayer (1820-1891), headed one of the most distinguished retail firms in the city, Charles Mayer and Co., Founded in 1840 (and therefore one of the earliest merchant enterprises), the Mayer firm was known throughout its 114-year history for its fine imported notions, toys, silverware, and jewelry.²

¹Jacob Piatt Dunn. (ed.), Memorial Record of Distinguished Men of Indianapolis and Indiana (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1912), pp. 454-55.

²Max R. Hyman (ed.), The Journal Handbook of Indianapolis (Indianapolis: The Indianapolis Journal Newspaper Co., 1902), pp. 358-360.

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Ethnic Significance (cont.)

The fifth family of German descent associated with residence are the current owners, the John G. Rauch, Sr. family. Beginning in the 1920's, Mr. and Mrs. Rauch strengthened the German flavor already in the home with their acquisition in Germany of paintings and objets d'art. In addition, the Rauchs conserved furnishings and design features associated with the Schnulls and Mayers and hung portraits of members of the Schnull, Mayer, and Rauch families in the home. Nothing so impresses the visitor with the residence's ties to the past as the sight of the twin portraits of the patriarch Henry Schnull and his wife, Mathilda Schramm Schnull, hanging in the second floor corridor.³

Commercial Significance

North Meridian Street was once lined with the mansions of the leading commercial proprietors of Indianapolis. During the city's Victorian period (c. 1860-1900), the "merchant princes" built their costly homes on Meridian Street north of the Mile Square (the original area of settlement) and south of Fall Creek. Their Edwardian successors could be found north of the Creek, in even more grandly scaled residence.

Gustav Schnull fell into the latter generation of merchants. His distinctive French Romanesque castle was one of the first mansions to rise on Meridian north of Fall Creek. Within a few years, the Schnulls were joined by the leading new industrialists and entrepreneurs of the twentieth century. Palatial residences for meat-packing magnate Frank Van Camp, printing millionaire Louis H. Levey, banker John P. Frenzel, Indianapolis Stockyards president Samuel E. Rauh, Stutz Motor Car founder Harry C. Stutz, and printing executive Alfred M. Glossbrenner all made their appearance on either side of the Schnull home on Meridian Street. Besides the businessmen, one great public officeholder, Charles W. Fairbanks, Vice-President of the United States from 1905 to 1909, erected a home north of Fall Creek.⁴

Today, few traces of the earlier Victorian merchant princes or their imposing domiciles remain on Meridian Street south of Fall Creek. Of the Edwardian residences mentioned above, only the Levey, Fairbanks, Stutz, Glossbrenner, and Schnull homes survive. Moreover, out of all the Meridian Street residences built before World War I, only the Schnull House has remained undisturbed in its original residential state, with original furnishings and interior plan preserved.

³Interview with Mrs. John G. Rauch, Sr., November 26, 1976

⁴R.L. Polk and Co., Indianapolis City Directory (Indianapolis: R.L. Polk and Co., 1912-1920, inclusive).

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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Commercial Significance (cont.)

While discussing the commercial significance of 3050 North Meridian, a word should be addressed to Schnull and Co., the source of the fortune which made the home possible. The firm had been launched originally in 1855. During the Civil War the concern greatly prospered. Following the war, with the growth of the South Meridian Street wholesale district and with Henry Schnull's business acumen, Schnull and Co. rose to a position of considerable prominence in the wholesale trade.

Gustav A. Schnull, the only son of the company's founder, Henry Schnull, became head of the operation in 1905. During Gustav's tenure, Schnull and Co. sustained its reputation as one of the principal wholesale houses in the city.⁵

In addition to the wholesale trade, Gustav Schnull's leadership in commerce extended into other business enterprises. Schnull helped to found Citizen's Gas and Coke Utility of Indianapolis and served as chairman of the board of the Belt Railroad and Stockyards Company (which operated the Indianapolis Stockyards), as well as a director of both the Fletcher Trust Company and the Fletcher-American National Bank (which have since merged to form American Fletcher National Bank.)⁶

Significance Related to Law

The ties of the Schnull-Rauch House to the legal profession are seen in the career of John G. Rauch, Sr. (1890-1976).

The latter, the son of a German-descended cigar merchant, married the second daughter of Gustav and Mathilda Schnull, Gertrude Alice Schnull (1893-), in 1914. The newly-wed Rauchs lived in a home built for them directly behind 3050 North Meridian (and still standing) until about 1923. At that time, owing to the serious illness of Mrs. Schnull, Mr. and Mrs. Rauch moved into the Schnull home. There they resided for the next fifty-five years.⁷

The association of John G. Rauch with law began with matriculation at the Harvard Law School in 1911. Graduation occurred in 1913, at which time Mr. Rauch was admitted to the bar.

The new attorney returned to Indianapolis, and in 1915 opened a law office in the Fletcher Trust Building, where he practiced law for the next sixty-one years.

⁵ Dunn, Memorial Record, pp. 453-455.

⁶ Indiana Division, Indiana State Library, "Indiana Biography Series [scrapbooks]", Volume 15, p. 119.

⁷ Interview with Mrs. Rauch, November 26, 1976.

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Significance Related to Law (cont.)

During his long practice, Mr. Rauch became one of the most influential members of the Indianapolis bar. He served as legal counsel to many of the most prominent businessmen in the city. John Rauch's profound interest in Hoosier law led him to co-author in 1928 A Bibliography of the Laws of Indiana, 1788-1927.⁸

As an influential attorney, Mr. Rauch provided service to the community in a variety of cultural and civic endeavors. As a discriminating collector of art, he served on the board of the Art Association of Indianapolis, assuming the presidency of that organization during the crucial period of the 1960's when the city's art museum moved to spacious new quarters on the Josiah K. Lilly, Jr. estate of "Oldfields." In addition, Mr. Rauch's pursuit of history as an avocation led him to offer leadership to the Indiana Historical Society as its chairman of the board during a long tenure. Finally, Mr. Rauch's support of the work of the Episcopal Church in the city caused him to accept the administrative post of Chancellor of the Diocese of Indianapolis.⁹

Perhaps of greatest import to the Schnull-Rauch House, John G. Rauch took great interest and care in preserving his adoptive home in its original state of elegance. Long before most citizens in Indianapolis perceived any especial charm or value in the Edwardian period, Mr. Rauch recognized the increasing rarity of 3050 North Meridian's features and sought to maintain them for the future.

Architectural Significance

The final aspect of the Schnull-Rauch House's significance, its architectural importance, ranks as highly as the various historical associations already reviewed. The residence at 3050 North Meridian immediately claims the attention of the student of Indianapolis architecture as one of the few residences in the city designed in the French Romanesque (Romanesque Revival) style. In addition, the architect who created its design was one of the most accomplished architects of Indianapolis at the turn of the century.

First a word should be directed to the home's Romanesque design. Although popular in other cities of the East and Midwest as residential mode in the 1890's, the French Romanesque style never found favor in the domestic architecture of Indianapolis.

⁸Citizens Historical Association, "John G. Rauch, Attorney at Law" (Indianapolis, October 9, 1948), on file in Indiana Division, Indiana State Library .
⁹[Obituary] Indiana State Bar Association, March, 1976, p. 133.

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Architectural Significance (cont.)

As Wilbur D. Peat, the noted Hoosier art historian, put it in his book Indiana Houses of the Nineteenth Century, the Richardsonian Romanesque treatment was typically reserved in Indiana for "large civic and commercial structures." This observation is borne out by the present writer's discovery of only one other purely Romanesque-inspired residence in Indianapolis. Thus, the Schnull-Rauch House may be seen as an architectural rarity in its native city. Moreover, 3050 North Meridian may be cited as one of the last mansions of Indiana to be designed in the French Romanesque mode.¹⁰

The Schnull-Rauch House also claims architectural significance by virtue of its design by Bernard Vonnegut (1855-1908). Vonnegut held a position of respect at the turn-of-the-century as one of the most well educated and accomplished of the Indianapolis architectural profession. A native of Indianapolis, Vonnegut attended not only the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (alone a rarity in the Indiana of the 1870's), but also the Polytechnic Institute of Hanover, Germany.¹¹

Upon his return to the United States, Bernard Vonnegut undertook an apprenticeship in the New York office of George B. Post, the noted architect of the skyscraper. While on Post's staff, Vonnegut helped to design the Vanderbilt mansions and the Produce Exchange in New York City. His abilities as a draughtsman and water colorist put him in good stead in both his apprenticeship and subsequent design work.¹²

At length, in the early 1880's, Vonnegut returned to his native city. In 1888 he established the firm Vonnegut and Bohn with fellow German Arthur Bohn (1861-1948; also educated in a German architectural school) as partner.¹³ With Vonnegut as the chief designer, the firm quickly won a reputation as one of the chief commercial and institutional architectural partnerships in the region, turning out such major Indianapolis commissions as Das Deutsche Haus (1892-1893; 1897-1898), headquarters of the leading German athletic, social, and cultural organization of the city (now called the Athenaeum); the Pembroke Arcade (1895), an enclosed retail mall modeled in part on Louis Sullivan's Transportation Building of the 1893 Columbian Exposition; the John Herron Art Institute (1905); and the original section of the L.S. Ayres and Company Department Store (1905), the first modern department store building in Indianapolis.¹⁴

¹⁰Wilbur D. Peat, Indiana Houses of the Nineteenth Century (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1962), p. 161.

¹¹Jacob Piatt Dunn, Greater Indianapolis (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1910) Volume II, p. 966.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

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Architectural Significance (cont.)

Nevertheless, while the firm's more lucrative commissions were to be found in the commercial realm, Bernard Vonnegut personally preferred residential design and became quite "sought after" by those commissioning large residences at the turn-of-the-century.¹⁵ In his residential work, Vonnegut soon showed himself at home in various architectural idoms, creating designs in German Renaissance, Queen Anne, Neo-Classic, and French Romanesque with equal facility. Indianapolis residences still standing planned by Vonnegut include the Friedrich Ruskaup House (1893) and a suspected Vonnegut design, the Louis H. Levey mansion (1903-1904).¹⁶

The Schnull-Rauch House is one of the last known residential commissions which Bernard Vonnegut personally undertook. As a member of the Schnull family (he had married Henry Schnull's daughter Nannie in 1883), Vonnegut and his firm had already drafted plans for several buildings and residences erected by the family. In 1902 he agreed to design a home for his brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Gustav and Mathilda Schnull.¹⁷

According to Mrs. John G. Rauch, Sr., one of the Schnull daughters, Mrs. Schnull helped Vonnegut plan the residence. It was the architect's sister-in-law who made many of the decisions regarding room placement, interior woods, hardware, etc. which give the home its distinctive character today.

The special care with which Vonnegut executed architectural commissions find illustration in his procedure for construction of 3050 North Meridian. Discovering that the soil on the site was primarily sand and gravel, the architect directed that the stone foundation alone be installed in the fall of 1902, so that it could settle for a whole winter (1902-1903). In this way, he could be sure that cracks would not develop in the ceilings of the house later.¹⁸

Like many of his commercial creations, the Schnull-Rauch House carries Bernard Vonnegut's personal trademark. Into the design of the medieval-appearing Romanesque facade, the architect worked the distinctive heraldic shields which appear in most of his designs.¹⁹

¹⁵Interview with Mrs. Kurt Lindener (daughter of Bernard Vonnegut)

January 4, 1978 ¹⁶Interview with Mrs. Lindener.

¹⁷Interview with Mrs. Lindener.

¹⁸Interview with Mrs. John G. Rauch, Sr., November 26, 1976.

¹⁹Interview with Mrs. Lindener.

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10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approximately 1.5 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Indianapolis West

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,6 5,7,2 1,5,0 4,4,0,6 9,4,0

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

E

G

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D

F

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The nominated property occupies all of Lot 20 and a 57 feet by 40 feet parcel in the northeast corner of Lot 5, in Block 2 of Bruce's North Park Addition to the City of Indianapolis. Lot 20 measures 297.5 feet by 106 feet, 8 inches.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

James A. Glass, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission

DATE

May 15, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

Room 705, Union Title Building, 155 E. Market Street (317) 633-3306

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Indianapolis

STATE

Indiana 46204

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL XX

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 9-27-79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST: KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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